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IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY FOR THE FIRST REGIONAL COOPERATION FRAMEWORK FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (1997-1999)

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INTRODUCTION

1. The first regional cooperation framework (RCF) for Latin America and the Caribbean (1997-1999) was approved by the Board at its first regular session 1997. It focuses on five priority areas - (a) social development and poverty eradication; (b) governance and the consolidation of democracy; (c) environment and development; (d) science and technology; and (e) trade and integration - with the area of gender as a cross-cutting theme.

2. In response to Executive Board decision 97/9 of 14 March 1997, the present document describes the means by which the objectives stated in the first RCF are expected to be achieved. The implementation strategy for the framework is the result of a broad consultative process carried out throughout the region on each of the priority themes. The present document reflects the consensus that emerged on the main strategic and operational aspects of the regional programme and the progress achieved in each of its components.

I. LESSONS OF PAST COOPERATION

3. The experience gained and lessons learned in the implementation of past UNDP cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean were duly taken into consideration in the formulation of the first RCF. Among the sources considered were: (a) the recommendations of the mid-term review of the fourth regional programme (1992-1996) (DP/1995/47/Add.5); (b) in-house experience and the results of evaluations of UNDP programmes, such as the Office of Strategic Planning and Evaluation's 1996 evaluation, entitled Global, Interregional and Regional Programmes: An Evaluation of Impact; (c) project evaluations carried out in the region; and (d) feedback from UNDP country offices, United Nations agencies and country partners (government leaders and representatives of civil society organizations).

4. The main recommendations included the need to:

(a) Make a greater effort to shape and orient the regional programme to better serve the needs of Governments and societies in the region, thus ensuring participation, sense of ownership and sustainability, requiring the increased involvement of interested actors and closer linkage with UNDP country offices in all phases of the programme cycle;

(b) Narrow the range of priorities and themes to focus the programme on critical and relevant issues, considering the organization's comparative advantages and substantive and operational capabilities, requiring the streamlining of the number of interventions into high-impact undertakings and the centring of the programme in policy dialogue and design;

(c) Stimulate the exchange of knowledge and the dissemination of best practices rather than attempt to provide services to all countries, avoiding support to institutions and making greater use of technical cooperation among developing countries;

(d) Leverage the role of UNDP as a catalyst and facilitator, avoiding isolated operations and strengthen alliances with international partners, particularly those within the United Nations system and the development banks.

II. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND ARRANGEMENTS

5. The lessons learned from past cooperation, the wide-ranging process of consultation carried out throughout the region, and the thrust of the process of change in UNDP provided the basis for the implementation strategy for the first RCF. The strategy adopted reaffirms that the functions of the regional programme are: (a) to provide a long-term regional and subregional vision of development; (b) to address problems that cut across national boundaries; (c) to facilitate exchanges among programme countries; and (d) to act as a hinge between the countries of the region and global issues and commitments. The strategy also builds upon the following UNDP comparative advantages: (a) a comprehensive sustainable human development approach; (b) a neutral position to act as a broker between different parties and countries and an advocate of the values of the United Nations; and (c) a network of country offices with the operational capacity to support regional interventions.

A. Common elements in the design and implementation of the components of the regional programme

6. The guiding principles of the strategy are:

(a) Client-orientation. Regional activities will be anchored from their inception to country institutions and country programmes, as well as by a clear orientation to priority needs, ensuring participation and ownership by Governments and civil society organizations and promoting capacity-building and sustainability. Programmes will be defined through consultations, dialogue and compacts at the national and regional levels, among policy-decision makers, the academic community, civil society organizations and the United Nations system;

(b) Focus. The programme will emphasize activities, particularly in the design of policy alternatives, in the areas of poverty eradication and democratic governance. In addition, the environment, trade, and science and technology will constitute thematic areas, to the extent that UNDP provides value added. Gender comprises a special focus, both in terms of gender-mainstreaming and as an area of concentration. In addition to greater thematic focus, the programme will also target the above-mentioned thematic areas at the subregional levels of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS);

(c) Demonstration and learning approach. The scope of country programmes will be amplified by: providing a regional perspective, intercountry comparisons and standards of excellence in the generation of knowledge and the design of policy alternatives; promoting the region-wide networking of institutions to improve access to knowledge and best practices; and providing opportunities for an exchange of information and experiences;

(d) Alliances and partnerships. Strategic alliances will be strengthened with partners, particularly multilateral organizations (the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the World Bank, the European Union, the Andean Development Corporation (Corporación Andina de Fomento (CAF)) and the Fund for the Plata Watershed) and regional organizations. The regional programme will link with the overall work of UNDP and the United Nations, to benefit from experiences in other parts of the world and to communicate the Latin America and Caribbean experience. Specific activities will establish synergistic relationships with UNDP global and national programmes and with resources earmarked for commitments derived from international and hemispheric conferences. Based on past experience, extrabudgetary resources will be mobilized to maximize impact.

B. Implementation strategy for each thematic area of the regional programme

1. Social development and poverty eradication

7. The objectives of this thematic area are: (a) to gain, through a comparative analysis, greater knowledge about the relationship between macroeconomic policies, poverty and equity; (b) to contribute to the design of macroeconomic policy alternatives, introducing poverty eradication and equity as key parameters; and (c) to promote consensus-building on policy alternatives.

Implementation strategy

Relationship of macroeconomic policies, poverty and equity

8. UNDP, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and IDB are co-financing a comparative analysis in 15 countries through a network of national research teams linked to universities and think-tanks and involving Ministries of Finance as key participants. Special case studies with a gender focus will be undertaken. The World Bank, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) will join the partnership in further comparative analyses of the links between macroeconomic policies and changes in the sectoral structure of production, labour markets and income distribution in 15 to 18 countries. Conclusions and recommendations will be published and distributed both at the regional and national levels. The respective Governments will be supported in using the country analyses to build national consensus on policy.

Basic social services

9. UNDP, the Government of Norway and UNICEF will co-finance a comparative analysis on social public expenditure and macroeconomic policies in 11 countries. The study will assess the domestic public budgets and official development assistance (ODA) resources allocations to basic social services. The relationship between social public expenditure, macroeconomic policies and globalization will be analysed and mechanisms for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of social expenditures will be identified. National teams will comprise members from national research institutions and Ministries of Finance,

Social Affairs, Education and Public Health. Results and recommendations will be presented at the end of 1998, in an international conference organized by the Government of Norway.

Permanent systems of household surveys

10. UNDP will help to expand a current IDB, World Bank and ECLAC regional programme aimed at improving household surveys and the capacity of countries to measure living standards and poverty conditions, a key instrument for the design and monitoring of public policies in the context of sustainable human development. With respect to the Anglophone countries of the Caribbean, and in collaboration with other development partners, the regional programme will seek to strengthen capacities to collect poverty-related data on a systematic basis.

Human development reports

11. The programme, in partnership with the national scientific communities, will assist national programmes in the preparation and publication of national human development reports, through regional workshops and the development of a common methodology. At the regional level, a Commission on Education chaired by a Nobel Laureate is preparing a report, tentatively entitled "A Regional Agenda for the 21st Century - Education in the Perspective of Human Development", for presentation at the April 1998 Summit of the Americas, which is scheduled to be held in Santiago, Chile.

Expected outputs

12. Expected outputs in the thematic area of social development and poverty eradication include: (a) 30 case-studies on the relationships between macroeconomic policies, poverty and equity in 15 to 18 countries; (b) two sets of recommendations at the regional level to incorporate poverty eradication and equity considerations for the design of macroeconomic policy packages; (c) 30 national workshops in 15 to 20 countries to discuss policy alternatives and to promote consensus-building on poverty eradication strategies and equity, with the participation of Governments, relevant United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and selected donors; (d) the collection and dissemination of best practices on partnerships for poverty programmes; (e) improved household surveys and institution-strengthening for poverty measurement and monitoring in 6 to 10 countries; (f) a regional report on education and 10 national human development reports; (g) a network of at least 30 high-level specialists as a UNDP and United Nations system resource base in the areas of macroeconomic policies, poverty eradication and social-economic equity.

Success criteria

13. Success in the thematic area of social development and poverty eradication will be measured by: (a) the relevance of the new knowledge gained and information disseminated for policy decisions; (b) the actual participation of the appropriate decision makers in considering the proposed alternatives; and (c) the extent of involvement of interested parties in consensus-building for policy decisions and of alliances forged.

2. Governance and the consolidation of democracy

14. The strategy in the area of democratic governance follows the guidelines established at the Ibero-American Summit Meeting of Heads of State and Government, held in Santiago, Chile, November 1996, and the Declaration of Viña del Mar. The strategy was endorsed by the Ministers of the Presidency in Santiago, Chile, in May 1997. The objectives of this thematic area are: (a) to contribute to debate and consensus-building, at national and regional levels, on institutional development for governance; (b) to focus on the design of policies for institutional reform and the capacity-building of priority institutions (judiciary, parliaments and political parties) and provide support to processes of decentralization and the strengthening of local organizations; (c) to promote data collection and processing, comparative studies, institutional networking and intercountry exchanges of experiences and dissemination of best practices on key subjects of democratic governance.

Implementation strategy

Institutional development and strengthening of leadership

15. The programme will strengthen national capacities for the analysis, formulation and application of strategies of institutional change and leadership development from a comprehensive view that integrates the political, economic and social dimensions of democracy. The approach emphasizes networking with focal points in several countries of the region and links with specialized academic institutions in developed countries. It includes: (a) building an electronic network on development, institutions and leadership; (b) implementing participatory workshops to foster consensus and to produce reports on key subjects of institutional reform; (c) developing leadership capacity for women and young political leaders; and (d) in the case of the Anglophone Caribbean, through the Assembly of Caribbean Community Parliamentarians (ACCP), the programme will support participation, dialogue and action on good governance issues by promoting more intensive involvement of civil society partners, including youths.

Promotion of the rule of law and access to justice

16. The regional programme will emphasize the issue of access to justice by the poor. It will work with judiciary systems, the executive and legislative branches of Governments, as well as with the civil society, including universities and NGOs. The main components of the programme include: (a) the implementation of data surveys and the collection of documentation by subregion to provide relevant information and indicators to judicial authorities; (b) efforts to advance consensus on the definition of regional and national policies and programmes in the areas of youthful offenders, women's and family issues, constitutional processes and penitentiary systems, as well as programmes for normative, institutional and cultural reform; (c) the establishment of a Latin American network of sector authorities, the media and NGOs concerned with judicial reform; and (d) the creation of compacts between UNDP, other United Nations agencies, development banks and bilateral donors on judicial modernization.

Decentralization

17. The programme will provide support to the decentralization processes in the countries of the region through the promotion of debate and the exchange of knowledge and experiences and stimulate coordination for practical action on decentralization (research, development projects and technical assistance) by strengthening the networks of relevant institutions and creating an information and exchange system. The members of the networks will be government agencies, NGOs, academic institutions, private sector and civil society organizations. A regional network and national networks of institutions concerned with decentralization will be created in at least 12 countries; an open information system in the Internet connected to a UNDP global Management Development and Governance Division programme called MAGNET will support the networks and will provide access to a wide range of actors (local governments, NGOs and private sector organizations).

Civic ethics and democratic culture

18. The programme will seek to elevate citizen awareness and disseminate democratic values through communications media and the implementation of cultural activities. The approach goes beyond existing formal institutional frameworks to encompass substantive and informal aspects related to the real structures and ethical and cultural traits that underlie political behaviour. The programme will encompass: (a) country-level events such as concerts, dialogues and videos, with the participation of prestigious intellectuals, leaders and artists; (b) messages disseminated thorough the press and radio; and (c) activities with the participation of grass-roots cultural organizations.

Expected results

19. Expected outputs in the thematic area of governance and consolidation of democracy include: (a) an electronic network on institutional development and leadership, including a centre of documentation, a virtual forum and an electronic bulletin to facilitate knowledge and the dissemination of information; (b) at least two regional workshops and reports per year on key subjects of institutional development; (c) the participation of approximately 300 women and young leaders in a leadership programme; (d) updated, reliable information for decision-making, workshops and programmes designed to address issues of judicial reform; (e) a regional and national network of institutions in at least 12 countries concerned with issues of decentralization; and (f) at least three cultural events per year in various countries and messages on democratic values in the press, including on radio and television.

Success criteria

20. Success in the thematic area of governance and consolidation of democracy will be measured by: (a) the extent to which networking among institutions and individuals is advanced; (b) the degree to which consensus is forged for a common agenda; (c) the level of use of electronic information systems; (d) the formulation of new programmes involving pertinent national institutions in priority areas, particularly in the area of judicial reform; and (e) the extent

of coverage and support for the campaign on cultural values and its self-financing capacity.

3. Environment and development

21. The objectives of this thematic area are: (a) to gain and disseminate knowledge and information about and to develop methods to address key environmental issues; (b) to enhance the environmental dimension in key development policies and sectors; (c) to carry out pilot initiatives to develop alternative technologies and methodologies; and (d) to promote consensus-building on critical environmental issues.

Implementation strategy

Environment and economics

22. A pilot study will be conducted to review environmental legislation in one subregional integration group and to assess the likely impact of the establishment of the Free Trade Area of the Americas on the environment. Comparative studies will also be carried out on: (a) the valuation of environmental goods and services into standardized systems of national accounts; (b) energy efficiency; and (c) regulatory frameworks, with emphasis on the impact of privatization and subsidies on the poor and the environment. A pilot initiative will be conducted to demonstrate the feasibility of decentralized and renewable alternative energy systems. Expected partners include the Global Environment Facility (GEF), ECLAC, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Latin American Energy Organization (Organización Latinoamericana de Energía (OLADE)), the United Nations Statistics Department, the Energy and Atmosphere Programme, and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

Financing the environmental agenda

23. The programme will carry out an analysis of the opportunities for joint portfolios with the private sector, an assessment of options for regional financing and investment mechanisms, and an analysis of the trends in aid flows to the environment. Expected partners will include IDB, UNEP and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development.

Promoting the environmental civic ethics

24. The programme will support the conduct of a GEF regional project on environmental citizenship, a case study on biodiversity and gender equity, and a comparative study in selected countries on the capacity of indigenous groups to participate in environmental and social impact assessment. Collaboration with IDB, GEF, UNEP and selected NGOs is expected.

Management of shared natural resources

25. GEF programmes aimed at ensuring improvements in productivity, the quality of production and sustainability in shared water basins and biodiversity

corridors will be promoted. The programme will also support the conduct of a comparative assessment on conflict resolution in shared ecosystems and, jointly with the IDB, a report on coastal and marine resources management.

Expected results

26. Expected results in the thematic area of environment and development include: (a) recommendations for further harmonization of environmental legislation in at least one integration group, a comparative analysis of experiences in introducing environmental factors in national accounts, the use of related methods and a demonstration project in at least two countries, a comparative analysis on energy efficiency, a regional report on energy regulatory frameworks, poverty and environment, and the economic and social sustainability of the pilot initiative in alternative rural energy systems; (b) consensus built among key actors (Governments, civil society, funding institutions) to support and fund regional projects and the attainment of new financing and investment mechanisms for environmental initiatives; (c) a new social compact build around the relationship between the environment, ethics and civic duty ethics and behaviour change related to these issues; and (d) improved productivity and sustainability and enhanced quality of goods and services brought about by shared resources and best practices for conflict resolution in shared ecosystems, and a regional report on the ocean realm from the Latin American and Caribbean Commission on Development and Environment.

Success criteria

27. Success in the thematic area of environment and development will be measured by: (a) the relevance of the new knowledge and methods produced for policy decision; (b) the actual participation of pertinent decision makers in considering the proposed alternatives; and (c) the extent of involvement of interested parties in consensus-building for policy decisions and of partnerships forged, joint initiatives funded and programmes launched relating to the management of common natural resources.

4. Science and technology

28. The objective of this thematic area is to promote access to information on sustainable development through greater utilization of information technologies.

Implementation strategy

Network for sustainable development in the Americas

29. The programme will promote the establishment of a network for sustainable development in the Americas, following the mandate received by UNDP at the Hemispheric Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, in December 1996. Linkages will be established with the Caribbean component of the Small Island Developing States Network. In addition, a pilot, Internet-based electronic network will be established between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of CARICOM member States and their missions abroad, in order to enhance efficiency in the conduct of external relations.

Expected results

30. The expected results in the thematic area of science and technology include: (a) the acquisition of information for decision-making on sustainable development issues; (b) the establishment of databases to assist users in the identification of experts, centres of excellence and best practices; (c) capacity-building of the users to access, create and use sustainable development information; and (d) enhanced communication among development stakeholders.

Success criteria

31. Success in the thematic area of science and technology will be measured by the scope of coverage and enhanced use of the networks in the decision-making process.

5. Trade and integration

32. The objectives in this thematic area include: (a) to assist CARICOM countries in their continuing negotiations in the context of the World Trade Organization (WTO), particularly with regard to services, and in the proposed negotiations on the Free Trade Area of the Americas; and (b) to contribute to the strengthening of existing regional trade and economic integration processes in the Latin America and Caribbean region.

Implementation strategy

CARICOM negotiating capacity

33. In collaboration with United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, relevant issues of the "built-in" WTO agenda and their impact will be assessed and technical meetings and workshops will be convened, with a view to assisting CARICOM countries in preparing their own agendas for trade negotiations. Regional colloquia will be held to sensitize NGOs and the public and private sectors to the new norms governing trade in services and to support effective optimization of recommended policies.

Contribution to the existing regional trade and economic integration process

34. The programme will bring together experts and decision makers and will prepare such technical studies as assessments of the expected costs and potential benefits of selected economic integration groupings and recommendations to inform economic integration efforts in the region. Technical support will be provided for amending the CARICOM legal framework to complete the creation of the single market and economy and to facilitate the adoption of new legislation at the national level. Broad-based consultations and an awareness-building campaign will aim at fostering consensus on the purposes and potential benefits of economic and trade integration.

Expected results

35. Expected results in the thematic area of trade and integration include: (a) three technical studies in the areas of services, guidelines for supporting the CARICOM position in future trade negotiations and capacity-building of Governments for trade negotiations; and (b) studies on the cost and potential benefits of selected economic integration groups.

Success criteria

36. Success in the thematic area of trade and integration will be measured by: (a) the degree to which common regional agendas are furthered in the CARICOM subregion and the incorporation of the new regional legal framework among member States; and (b) the extent to which the cost-benefit studies inform economic integration processes in Latin America and the Caribbean.

6. Gender

37. Based on the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, the objectives of the thematic area are: (a) developing a common regional agenda on gender and leadership; (b) raising public awareness on the issue of violence against women; and (c) developing tools that will assist mainstreaming of gender-related approaches into development policy.

Implementation strategy

Women and leadership

38. Forums for the identification of needs and common plans of action will be created through the establishment of four regional networks for: (a) persons in decision-making positions; (b) persons in young leadership positions; (c) parliaments and political parties; and (d) civil society organizations. Expected partners include the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), UNICEF and IDB, particularly in follow-up actions.

Violence against women

39. A campaign on violence against women will be launched, building upon synergies inherent in the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights (1998). In support of the campaign, inter-agency activities at the national and regional level will be implemented with the following partners: UNIFEM, UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Department of Public Information, regional and global organizations.

Mainstreaming

40. Through a pilot exercise, efforts will be made to develop gender-mainstreaming tools and strategies in Central America. The exercise will include the selection and development of criteria and the implementation of activities to monitor progress in the area of the advancement of women.

Expected results

41. Expected results in the thematic area of gender include: (a) four regional networks established and a common agenda developed; (b) a programme implemented on violence against women, including the promotion of inter-agency activities, the creation of a directory of organizations and resources available, the production of messages and the promotion of national debates and support to organizations; and (c) tools developed to monitor gender-mainstreaming, directories established best practices documented, and national surveys conducted on issues related to gender themes.

Success criteria

42. Success in the thematic area of gender will be measured by: (a) the extent to which a viable, common regional agenda is established in the area of leadership and women; (b) the extent to which public awareness about violence against women is raised in specific target groups on violence; (c) the extent to which mainstreaming tools are utilized by target groups and disseminated in the region.

III. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

43. Regional organization with the requisite capacities will execute the regional programmes with the support of UNDP country offices. United Nations agencies, particularly the United Nations Office for Project Services, will implement specific project components.

44. The Principal Project Resident Representative (PPRR) and the project coordinator will set a timetable for periodic review of project work plans, which will be results oriented and include benchmarks and performance indicators. An annual review meeting of stakeholders will measure project achievements against benchmarks and success criteria. The PPRR will report to the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (RBLAC) annually on the outcomes of the reviews. An annual report on the performance of the regional programme by thematic area will be submitted by RBLAC to the Programme Management Oversight Committee (PMOC).

45. A headquarters-country Office annual compact will also define the actions needed to buttress regional programmes in the participating countries, as well as those required to enhance the links between regional and country programmes.

46. During 1998, all regional projects will be screened by the methodology developed by RBLAC to assess the potential of projects to have a positive impact on poverty eradication, gender, environment and good governance. A set of 30 variables/indicators has already been tested in more than 800 national projects.

47. The regional cooperation framework will be reviewed in 1999. All regional programmes will be evaluated upon their completion; the issues to be addressed through the evaluations as well as their timing will be determined by PMOC, in consultation with regional bureaux and the Evaluation Office.

IV. EXECUTIVE BOARD ACTION

48. The Executive Board may wish to:

Approve the implementation strategy for the first regional cooperation framework for Latin America and the Caribbean as contained in document DP/1998/10.

Annex

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND ALLOCATION TARGET TABLE
FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (1997-1999)

(In thousands of United States dollars)

Regional cooperation framework programme areas	Resource allocation	
	Core	Non-core
1. Social development and poverty eradication	4 600	5 500 (IDB, WB, bilateral donor)
2. Governance and the consolidation of democracy	5 200	3 500 (CAF, bilateral donor)
3. Environment and development	1 500	49 000 (WB, IDB, GEF, CAP)
4. Science and technology	1 034	1 000 (IDB, GEF)
5. Trade and integration	1 900	-
6. Gender	1 000	-
TOTAL	15 234	59 000

Abbreviations: IDB = Inter-American Development Bank; WB = World Bank; CAF = Andean Development Corporation; GEF = Global Environment Facility; and CAP = Capacity 21.

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COUNTRY COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS AND RELATED MATTERS

Assistance to Myanmar

Note by the Administrator

SUMMARY

In reporting on activities for assistance to Myanmar since the adoption of Executive Board decision 96/1 of January 1996, the Administrator notes that: (a) during 1997, all components of the 10 projects comprising the Human Development Initiative-Extension (HDI-E) were initiated, in conformity with Governing Council and Executive Board decisions 93/21 and 96/1; and (b) an independent HDI-E assessment mission of six senior international experts undertook an assessment of the 10 projects and HDI-E as a whole from 24 August-13 September 1997. The mission found that the projects of HDI-E continue to meet their objectives and provide key strategic lessons and experience for the future. A recommendation on the nature of future UNDP assistance to Myanmar may be found in chapter VII.

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I. PURPOSE

1. In response to Executive Board decision 96/1, the present report contains an assessment of the extent to which the assistance provided to Myanmar continues to meet the provisions of Governing Council decision 93/21. In so doing, it takes into account the major findings and conclusions of a recent six-member international assessment mission (24 August-14 September 1997), which reviewed project activities undertaken within the framework of the Human Development Initiative (HDI) and HDI-Extension (HDI-E). Through the present report, the guidance and approval of the Executive Board is sought on the nature of future UNDP assistance to Myanmar.

II. INTRODUCTION

2. During 1997, all components of the projects comprising HDI-E were fully initiated. These projects had been approved by the Administrator in July 1996, in strict conformity with Executive Board decision 96/1.

3. An independent international team of six senior experts examined the procedural and institutional arrangements and the monitoring and assessment mechanisms for HDI-E as a whole and for each of the 10 projects, as well as the strategic lessons learned from HDI and HDI-E over the course of the past year. The contents of the present report are largely guided by the findings of the team, which were that, in great measure, the objectives and strategies of the 10 constituent projects of HDI-E continue to be in keeping with Governing Council and Executive Board instructions, and that they incorporate strategic lessons and experiences from HDI (1994-1996) and HDI-E (1996-1998) to date.

4. It should also be noted that other reviews and evaluations have been and are being carried out at the thematic and sectoral levels. For instance, an evaluation was undertaken recently to review the successes and challenges of the bottom-up planning process of HDI-E. Furthermore, under the HDI-E support project, a study of community-based organizations (CBOs) has been carried out to ensure continued empowerment, sustainability and capacity-building at the grass-roots level. At the sectoral level, an evaluation of the primary health-care project was carried out by a team of independent consultants during September and October 1997, at the same time as the preparation of the present report. An evaluation of all United Nations-assisted interventions in HIV/AIDS prevention and care and a review of United Nations-wide interventions in reproductive health are being planned as well. In addition, a study is being scheduled to review the impact of HDI and HDI-E on income generation, environmental stability and food security, starting with the southern Shan State.

III. ASSESSMENT OF HDI-E (1996-1998)

5. HDI-E became effective in October 1996. However, 4 out of the 10 individual projects, namely, the Dry Zone environment and food security, micro-credit, HDI-E support and HIV/AIDS projects, were initiated only during May through July 1997. HDI-E is targeted at 23 townships located in the central Dry Zone, southern Shan State, the Ayeyarwaddy Delta and Rakhine, Chin and

Kachin States, and comprises three clusters of projects in the following areas: human development and humanitarian needs; environment and food security; and activities of an intersectoral nature. All 10 projects are being executed by United Nations specialized agencies, namely, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS), and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). These executing agencies have assigned full-time international chief technical advisers (CTAs) to each project to oversee field activities and to manage project resources. Cooperation and partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), both international and national, are being strengthened, especially with regard to facilitating community participation at the grass-roots level. An HDI-E support project under the intersectoral cluster is aimed at improving management, organization, monitoring and evaluation practices of HDI-E, as well as ensuring the sharing and cross-fertilization of experiences gained between and among all HDI-E projects. In addition, annual observation visits to project areas by officials of interested diplomatic missions accredited to Myanmar continue to provide another layer of monitoring. As in the past, regular briefings for civil society organizations on the progress of HDI-E interventions were organized by the UNDP Resident Representative.

6. As required by Executive Board decision 96/1, all projects are being implemented in conformity with Governing Council decision 93/21, from which the three overall objectives of HDI-E flow: (a) creating a visible and measurable impact on the well-being of the people, the poor and disadvantaged in particular, in the specific sectors of health, education and training, food security, HIV/AIDS, and the environment; (b) promoting participatory approaches, by involving communities in the identification and implementation of grass-roots initiatives of direct benefit to them; and (c) strengthening local capacities required to sustain community-focused development to improve the living conditions and household incomes of rural communities. The paragraphs below highlight how, in operational terms, these overarching human development objectives are being pursued and achieved.

7. Primary health care. Accessibility to health-care services for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged has improved significantly. The 1,153 Village Health Committees (VHCs) constituted in four new focus townships and existing VHCs that have been revitalized in seven former focus townships play a crucial role in implementation of project activities. There has been a visible impact from activities pertaining to malaria and leprosy that have been brought within the primary health-care project under HDI-E. Training, retraining and the provision of drugs, supplies and equipment have greatly improved the capacities of community health workers (CHWs), midwives, other basic health staff and medical officers to tackle priority health problems. Community refresher courses for existing CHWs and AMWs, the selection and training of new voluntary health workers (CHWs and AMWs), and supplying health kits are part of the scheme to strengthen grass-roots infrastructure through capacity-building and empowerment. The acute problem of iodine deficiency is being addressed through a number of strategically targeted interventions, including community awareness-raising and training; cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in this area has been greatly enhanced. Leprosy control and treatment

is being successfully carried out, further supported by the community-based rehabilitation of persons affected with leprosy, through income-generation promotion efforts supplemented by small loan funds. Through township launching workshops at all HDI-E townships, the project has provided tools to empower communities to become self-reliant and develop sustainable practices for their own development, such as community needs assessment exercises, the Village Health Fund Initiative Programme and the renovation of health centres.

8. HIV/AIDS. Project activities have led to enhanced community awareness through improved information, education and communication approaches and capacity-building for community-based HIV/AIDS support programmes. In-depth, location-specific surveys in high-risk areas are ensuring closer monitoring, thereby allowing for timely actions to prevent the spread of the disease.

9. Water supply and sanitation. Through community initiative support facilities established under the HDI-E project, significant achievements have been made in mobilizing and strengthening communities to sustain healthful water supply and sanitation practices. A total of 3,750 villages in 560 village tracts have been targeted in the 11 focus townships for project interventions. Needs assessment surveys have been carried out in 1,127 villages to identify potential resources and a range of affordable solutions to water supply and sanitation problems for villagers. Water user-groups have been formed within each community to ensure wider participation of project beneficiaries, particularly women.

10. Education and training. Project activities under the education project are well-targeted in all of the village tracts in the 11 focus townships of the central Dry Zone, southern Shan State and the Delta. There have been improvements in the level of school enrolment, as well as a 30 per cent reduction in drop-out rates. Parents and Teachers Associations (PTAs) are being strengthened, thereby encouraging wider participation in matters relating to primary education. Another HDI-E project activity involves the provision of advice and guidance to communities in planning school facility improvements to ensure that school design meets the local environmental and social needs of the communities. It should be noted, however, that low rates of school attendance in many remote villages are related to rural poverty and, particularly in the Delta region, school attendance continues to be hampered by a lack of physical access, such as the absence of small bridges across waterways.

11. Micro-credit. The micro-credit project is almost exclusively targeted at the poorest of the poor. It is well-designed to meet the needs of the rural poor for self-employment and income-generating activities. Project interventions will strengthen capacity at the community and village levels to self-manage micro-credit schemes to improve village productivity. Micro-credit schemes are being established with the close cooperation and technical assistance of three international NGOs, namely, Grameen Trust of Grameen Bank, Bangladesh; Private Agencies Collaborating Together (PACT), the United States of America; and Groupe de recherches et d'échanges technologiques (GRET), France. Project activities will benefit over 30,000 of the poorest households within the 30-month period of HDI-E.

12. Environment and food security. Environmental issues are being addressed through a strategy of reversing environmental degradation, while at the same time ensuring the sustainability of natural resources. This has a direct impact on poverty alleviation since much of the rural population is dependent on the forestry resources from its immediate surroundings. Several project activities address varying degrees of environmental degradation and food security issues in specific project locations. As a result, the capacities and awareness of communities about ways to better manage and make more sustainable use of fragile and vulnerable natural resources have been improved among the target groups in the central Dry Zone and southern Shan State. Priority is given to income-generating activities involving the use of renewable resources, such as agricultural crops, livestock, forestry and fisheries, coupled with the rehabilitation of the environment and its natural resources. In the central Dry Zone, 40 new Farmers' Income-Generation Groups (FIGGs) have been formed and 3,500 bags of fertilizers as well as some seeds have been distributed to them; nearly 150 farmers have received training in livestock raising; two community woodlots, totalling 60 acres, have been established; and 2,000 fuel-efficient A-1 stoves have been procured for distribution. In southern Shan State, 30 micro-projects have been successfully implemented by communities, 125 are continuing and 17 are in the pipeline. Continuing support is being provided to 29 FIGGs and 22 Women's Income-Generation Groups (WIGGs), formed under the earlier phase of HDI. Capacity-building through training is ongoing: an observation tour of 25 farmers from a new township visited an established HDI project site; 27 field staff were trained to carry out appraisals of projects in rural areas; and 25 farmers have been trained in making fuel-efficient A-1 stoves. In the Ayeyarwaddy Delta, where the mangrove forests were exploited for the manufacture of charcoal wood stoves, HDI-E project activities are making significant progress in rehabilitating the badly damaged environment. Over 500,000 mangroves and non-mangrove seedlings have been distributed for planting in 400 acres of mangrove forests and village woodlots; 225 acres of mangrove forests are being protected by communities for revival; 42 village development committees, comprising 180 community groups, have been formed for income generation, women's development, forest conservation and extension activities by villagers; 2,000 alternative-fuel stoves (rice husk) have been manufactured and distributed by villagers; and 900 income-generation activities have been implemented by poor and landless families in fisheries, livestock and agriculture. Again, a key strategy is to give priority to promoting income-generating activities for poor, marginalized communities. Villagers have been mobilized in the project townships to form interest groups concerned with income improvement - the groups identify their strengths and opportunities for developing income, then participate in intensive HDI-E training programmes through which they also receive credit in kind. This has led to a considerable increase in income-generating activities in the project villages, where revolving credit funds now exist, managed by the village groups themselves. Communities have actively participated in the rehabilitation of their environment. Mangroves are being replanted on the river banks, and eucalyptus and fruit-bearing trees have been planted elsewhere to rehabilitate and stabilize the land and to provide for future needs for fuelwood, food and construction materials. Rural populations in these environmentally devastated regions now understand the issues and problems better, and are adapting their practices to improve and rehabilitate the environment while at the same time

improving their own household incomes and preparing for a better future for their children.

13. Community development in remote border areas. This new project extends UNDP assistance to the marginalized ethnic minority communities inhabiting the remote border areas in Chin, Rakhine and Kachin States. Project interventions in selected townships in these regions allow for immediate channelling of much-needed humanitarian and development assistance to these otherwise unreached communities, while at the same time allowing for the testing and development of an integrated, rapid, but sustainable, area-based development approach. With a vast area of difficult terrain to cover, the initiation of this project proved to be a formidable task. The project team of expatriate United Nations Volunteers (soon to be strengthened by the addition of an international area manager for northern Rakhine), and the national professional staff, led by a full-time international CTA, worked together with a large number of community-level field staff (community development workers (CDWs)) to establish a strong presence in their project areas through community group formation activities and needs assessment surveys. Additionally, as a constituent project of HDI-E, this project receives strong substantive collaboration from the HDI support project in terms of training, research, monitoring and evaluation and information, education and communication activities. Attention is being given to strengthening the technical advice and support linkages with the sectoral projects of HDI-E in primary health care, basic education, agriculture and forestry, water and sanitation, among other areas.

14. HDI support. The key goal of the HDI support project is to ensure that the development process is fully participatory and that HDI-E meets the needs of the poorest segments of the rural target communities. Towards this end, the project engages two full-time monitoring and evaluation officers who are accountable solely to UNDP. These officers monitor and help to ensure that the assistance provided reaches the target beneficiaries in a non-discriminatory manner, and that participation in project activities is engendered in a non-exclusive and open manner. A cadre of national staff stationed in the field - one human development officer (HDO) in each township, assisted by 10 CDWs working at the community level in every township - also ensure continuous UNDP presence and oversight. Considerable efforts have been made through the HDI-E support project to bring about greater cohesiveness and coordination of project activities at the township and village levels. While integration at the village level is proceeding very well, the strategy still needs to be fully established at the township and project management levels. Important progress has been made in developing appropriate mechanisms and systems for the project's main support functions, namely, in integrated development management; research and analysis; training; information education and communication; and monitoring and evaluation, as well as in providing common services, including logistical and administrative support facilities for the sectoral projects.

15. Partnership with NGOs. NGOs, both international and national, are increasingly playing a vital role in promoting participatory and community development activities, introducing bottom-up planning, and building local capacity at the community level. Improved mechanisms have been established for involving NGOs as major implementing partners, particularly in activities relating to HIV/AIDS, basic health and community-based income-generating

activities. The estimated total of HDI-E budget allocations for international NGOs stands at $6 million, which is well over the amount of $1.8 million disbursed for international NGO-related activities during the HDI period (1994-1996). Efforts are under way to increase even further the number of NGOs entering into partnerships with HDI-E projects, among which is a study tour being organized to facilitate the collaboration of Asian NGOs in Myanmar.

IV. STRATEGIC LESSONS FROM HDI AND HDI-E

16. The HDI assessment mission concluded that HDI was a successful evolving model for dealing with poverty alleviation at the grass-roots level, bringing benefits to all without exclusion or discrimination. This was clearly evident in the villages and village tracts in the target townships of HDI-E project activities. A key strategy has been to involve grass-roots participation in the development process, thereby providing opportunities to increase the participation of people in villages in identifying their needs and deciding on the management of resources being channelled for their welfare and development.

17. The mechanism for involving grass-roots participation has been to build local capacities through the formation of user-groups that interact with HDI-E projects and then participate in decision-making on social and economic development activities in their communities. Thus the community and village groups comprising the poorest of the poor have begun to form themselves as social institutions, energizing the social systems of the villages.

18. Project interventions have generated and instilled development consciousness among the local villagers. This has led to the articulation and preparation of village development plans by the villagers themselves, with minimum support from HDI-E projects. The challenge ahead is for rural populations to broaden these micro-initiatives into the community level. In this context, HDI and HDI-E have successfully instituted innovative strategies and mechanisms for the transfer of skills and experiences from one community to another. Technology transfer, embedded in products delivered through HDI-E projects, such as ferro-cement tanks for improved rainwater catchment, and the making of simple, inexpensive yet effective fuel-efficient stoves have proved to be practical and effective. The current strategy of HDI-E is to further disseminate information on these innovative technologies through information, education and communication materials and study tours, in order to facilitate the sharing of experiences from one village community to another.

19. The nature of a programme such as HDI-E, which depends on building grass-roots institutions through participatory means, requires longer periods of follow-through interventions, tailor-made to the degree of progress in different locations and conditions. Planning of future programme interventions, therefore, should take into account the underlying longer-term perspective necessary for achieving sustainability. The continuity of sustained follow-through as well as mechanisms to broaden successful interventions will need to be built into future project strategies in order to sustain their positive impact.

20. HDI-E activities funded and coordinated by UNDP and implemented by United Nations specialized agencies and UNOPS are successfully establishing durable institutional and implementation structures for coordinated development efforts at the township and village levels. These should provide the basis for the efficient delivery and absorption of possible future assistance from multiple partnerships in support of local and national development efforts. Such an example can be seen in a coordinated and collaborative effort of WHO, UNICEF and UNDP to develop a common programme strategy for implementing an essential drugs programme involving community cost-sharing. Greater convergence in the United Nations system programme and implementation arrangements at the country level would be facilitated by a commonly shared United Nations-wide strategic policy framework, reflecting United Nations system overall developmental goals and approach in the country, a prospect currently on the agenda of the United Nations country team in Myanmar.

V. CONCLUSION

21. The HDI assessment mission confirmed that the objectives and strategies of the 10 projects comprising HDI-E are in keeping with Executive Board decision 96/1. The strategy for programme coordination and monitoring is progressing well and considerable success has been achieved in fully integrating and converging all activities under HDI-E projects. Enhanced cooperation and partnerships with NGOs is being effected, especially with regard to facilitating community participation at the grass-roots level. Continuous monitoring and periodic evaluation is deemed essential, not only to measure impact and to facilitate timely decisions for adjustments during implementation of HDI-E projects, but more importantly to ensure non-discriminatory and non-exclusionary participation by all target beneficiaries in HDI-E activities. The HDI-E support project is providing this important function and much progress has been made in developing appropriate monitoring and evaluation systems to address this need. The continuing strategic lessons and experiences from HDI and HDI-E will, over time, allow for the development of a successful model for ensuring sustainability in poverty alleviation interventions at the grass-roots level and for advancing grass-roots development. The planning of future programme interventions should take into account the underlying longer-term perspective required to achieve greater impact and to ensure sustainability of project achievements.

VI. HDI: CONTINUING ACTIVITIES

22. Executive Board decision 96/1 authorized the Administrator to approve projects for a total amount not exceeding $52,076,000 during the period 1996-1997. These resources will enable the support of HDI-E activities until mid-1999. There continues to exist a critical and urgent need to help people to help themselves through a sustained human development assistance effort on a broader scale. HDI and HDI-E already have the necessary mechanisms and structures in place to achieve such an impact. Given the lead time required for the formulation, appraisal and approval of new projects, the Administrator seeks the agreement of the Board to submit a proposal for future UNDP assistance to Myanmar, with a view to enhancing capacity-building and sustainability.

VII. EXECUTIVE BOARD ACTION

23. The Executive Board may wish to:

1. Approve the continued use of resources approved under its decision 96/1 to support Human Development Initiative-Extension activities until mid-1999;

2. Request the Administrator to submit, at its annual session 1998, a proposal for future UNDP assistance to Myanmar.